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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 002837

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, IO A/S SILVERBERG, AND AF/SPG  
NSC FOR PITTMAN

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [AU](#) [SU](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: SE NATSIOS DISCUSSES DARFUR WITH SUDANESE OFFICIALS

Classified By: CDA Cameron Hume, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: In meetings with Special Envoy Andrew Natsios from December 10-12, Sudanese officials expressed their ongoing support for the November 30 Abuja agreement. They indicated a willingness to expedite the implementation of UN Secretary General (UNSYG) Kofi Annan's proposal for "phase one" of United Nations (UN) assistance for the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and to work towards an agreement to accelerate "phase two." They expressed continued resistance to an international force wearing the UN's "blue berets" and offered little clarification on the structure of a joint UN/AU mission, which UN officials in Khartoum described as problematic. Sudanese officials noted, however, that the government wanted SE Natsios' trip to be fruitful.

12. (C) Summary continued: Throughout his meetings, SE Natsios told his Sudanese interlocutors that the USG was more interested in seeing demonstrable progress "on the ground" than on agreements that go unimplemented. He said that the USG had demonstrated its interest in progress through the November 16 Addis Ababa agreement, which could not be re-negotiated. SE Natsios said that there had been no movement on "phase one" of the UNSYG's proposal and that "phase two" was "paralyzed." He also explained that the room for negotiation with the Sudanese government would narrow when the Democratic Party takes control of the U.S. Congress in January. SE Natsios repeatedly told Sudanese officials that he would need to point to concrete progress toward peace in Darfur when he testifies before the House Committee on International Relations (HIRC) in January. He proposed that the Sudanese government implement "phase one" by December 15 and conclude an agreement with the AU and the UN on implementation of "phase two" by December 31. Though Sudanese officials agreed to move forward on "phase one" (without, however, indicating that they would agree to the blue beret), they indicated that President Bashir would need to make a decision on "phase two." A meeting between SE Natsios and President Bashir is scheduled for December 13. End summary.

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Meeting with Foreign Minister Lam Akol  
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13. (C) In a December 10 meeting with SE Natsios, Foreign Minister Lam Akol called the November 16 Addis Ababa agreement on Darfur a "big step for us." He noted that the remaining issues to be resolved were the appointment of the UN Secretary General's special representative, the size of a peace-keeping force in Darfur, and the appointment of a force commander to lead an AU-UN operation. Akol said that a recent press statement released by the Sudanese Embassy in

Washington re-stating Bashir's rejection of a UN role was "outdated", and emphasized that the Council of Ministers had endorsed the November 30 Abuja agreement. "We understand that the UN should have a role in decision making and in running things," said Akol. "We are still committed to the fact that once the AU and the UN agree on size, we will use that. Sudan is not even a party to that discussion." Akol said that implementation of "phase one" of UNSYG Annan's plan for UN assistance to the AU was proceeding. When questioned why over 30 UN police advisors had been turned back to Khartoum at the airport in El Fasher, North Darfur two weeks before, Akol characterized the incident as a "misunderstanding."

14. (C) SE Natsios emphasized that "phase one" should be implemented as soon as possible, and said that the USG needed to see evidence of the implementation of the Addis Ababa agreement "on the ground." "We are not interested in what anyone agrees to," he said. "We're interested in what people do." Akol said that the Sudanese government and the USG were on the "same wavelength" in their interpretation of the Abuja agreement, and that there would be no backtracking.

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Meeting with Intelligence Chief Salah Ghosh  
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15. (C) In a meeting with SE Natsios on December 10, National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) chief Salah Ghosh described the Sudanese government's strategy to negotiate individually with the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) non-signatories. He said that he had met with rebel leaders Sharif Hareer, Khamis Abdullah, and Ahmed Diraige ten days before in an attempt to "make a deal" with the National Redemption Front (NRF). Ghosh called Diraige "reasonable,"

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and noted that Diraige was "a political leader only and did not control any troops." He said that he was negotiating with Ahmed Abdul Shafi and planned to meet him in Cairo on December 12. Ghosh also indicated that he could reach an agreement with Abdel Wahid al-Nur, and acknowledged the importance of Abdel Wahid's symbolic status within the Fur population, though this exceeded his actual military strength. Ghosh said that he was working with the "Libyans" to bring Abdel Wahid to Tripoli in the near future, where he hoped to conclude an agreement with him. "We believe that if we put our hands together with the international community, we can be successful in reaching an agreement with the rebels," said Ghosh.

16. (C) Ghosh concurred with Akol's earlier assessment that "phase one" could proceed quickly and explained that the UN police advisors who had been turned away in El Fasher had entered Sudan before the conclusion of the Addis Ababa agreement. When SE Natsios proposed that "phase one" be implemented by December 15, Ghosh replied, "Why not?" SE Natsios then proposed that the AU, UN, and Sudanese government conclude an agreement on implementing "phase two" by December 31 and begin implementation by early January. SE Natsios said that in order to avoid a severe deterioration in the bilateral relationship, he needed to point to demonstrable progress toward peace in Darfur when he testified in front of the (HIRC) on January 24. He reminded him that Ghosh had said during SE Natsios' October visit that the government would agree to any number of troops but was now trying to lower the established Addis Ababa agreement of 17,000 troops and 3,000 police. Ghosh said he would raise SE Natsios' proposals with his government. (Note: In a call later that evening with CDA Hume, Ghosh said that he had raised the issue of "phase one" implementation with President Bashir, who agreed that it could move forward. CDA Hume asked if the UN advisors would enter under UN blue berets or AU green berets. Ghosh said only that Minister of Defense Abdul Rahim Mohammed Hussein insisted on green berets, so it would require a decision by Bashir. End note.)

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Meeting with UNSYG'S Deputy Representative  
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¶7. (C) Meeting with SE Natsios on December 10, the UNSYG's Principal Deputy Special Representative Taye-Brook Zerihoun underscored the importance of the creation of the tripartite commission between the UN, AU, and Sudanese governments to advance implementation of "phase one" and "phase two." He said that both the UN and AU had appointed their representatives to the commission, but were awaiting the Sudanese government's nominees. Taye-Brook said that he was skeptical that the Sudanese government would proceed with either phase, noting President Bashir's frequent mention of AMIS Force Commander Luke Aprezi's comments that two additional AMIS battalions could achieve stability in Darfur.

He said that the UN and AU still agreed with the June joint assessment that 17,000 troops and police were needed to ensure security in the region, one-third of which would consist of support and logistics staff. Taye-Brook said that at least 5,000 of these would need to come from outside of Africa.

¶8. (C) Taye-Brook stated that the UN Department of Peace-keeping Operations (UNDPKO) was finalizing a specific proposal for "phase two," which would be transmitted to the Sudanese government in the near future. He said that this would need to be agreed to as "an annex" to the Addis Ababa agreement. However, Taye-Brook expressed his concerns about the structure of a UN-AU mission. The administrative constraints on the UNSYG's special representative would be problematic, given the Sudanese government's view that he would be overseeing both the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and a Darfur intervention--the latter of which would be subordinate to an AU command. "Would that mean procurement from two separate budgets?" questioned Taye-Brook. He said it would also be difficult to select a force commander to head both missions, given the Sudanese government's demand that the force commander be African and the necessity that a force commander for Southern Sudan be Indian, Bangladeshi, or Pakistani based on their significant troop contributions.

¶9. (C) (Note: During a December 10 phone call with UNDPKO Undersecretary Jean-Marie Guehenno, SE Natsios requested a copy of the UN's proposal for "phase two." Guehenno said that the principle impediment to progress was the beret color. UNDPKO sent the proposal to SE Natsios on December

¶10. It will be briefed to the UN Security Council on December 15 and, pending approval, will be sent to the

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Sudanese government during the week of December 18. Separately, CDA Hume received confirmation on December 12 that the Sudanese government had nominated two members to the tripartite commission. End note.)

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Meeting with Presidential Advisor Ghazi Salahuddin  
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¶10. (C) In a December 12 meeting with SE Natsios, Presidential Advisor Ghazi Salahuddin said he sought constructive solutions to areas of disagreement on UN intervention in Darfur so SE Natsios' visit could be "successful." He acknowledged that President Bashir's August 5 plan to stabilize Darfur by force "had been overtaken by events." He concurred with Akol and Ghosh's assessment that the Sudanese government supported the recent Abuja agreement, and said that it had no objection to implementation of "phase one." He said the principal areas of disagreement between the Sudanese government and the USG on UN intervention remained beret color and the size of the force. SE Natsios said it was unlikely that the UN would yield on "hatting" but that the Sudanese government should engage directly with the UN on the issue.

¶11. (C) According to Salahuddin, hard-liners within the Sudanese government believe that the 17,000-troop recommendation was inflated in order to force acceptance of non-African soldiers. He recommended that an agreement should be reached on "5,000 to 10,000" troops as a base, and that more might not be needed if a peace settlement could be reached on the ground. "Let's leave it (the size of the force) as open-ended," he said, adding that setting a "movable date" for troop withdrawal might help to re-assure hard-line elements of his government of the temporary nature of the UN's role in Sudan. Responding to Salahuddin's assertion that there were only 10,000 troops in Southern Sudan to support implementation of the CPA, CDA Hume said that a larger force would be needed in Darfur due to the acute security situation and to the lack of a political settlement like the CPA. SE Natsios noted that the National Congress Party (NCP) had had a single interlocutor--the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM)--in the South when negotiating a peace settlement, as opposed to the splintered rebel groups in Darfur.

¶12. (C) SE Natsios reiterated the necessity for immediate, concrete steps to be taken to resolve the crisis in Darfur and again proposed that the Sudanese government conclude an agreement on implementation of "phase two" by December 31. He also asked if the Sudanese government would facilitate the "two-chamber" structure of the "dysfunctional" Cease-fire Commission (CFC) to include the DPA non-signatories. SE Natsios called for a CFC meeting to be held before the Joint Commission meeting scheduled for December 15 in Addis Ababa to provide an update on violations. He said it was in the interest of the Sudanese government to improve the functioning of the CFC and that the USG was willing to make more public condemnations of rebel violations of the cease-fire. "The CFC will not end the crisis in Darfur," said Natsios, "but it is a constructive process." Salahuddin cautioned that the rebels used the last cease-fire to "expand and re-arm" but said he would discuss SE Natsios' request with Bashir and Hussein in preparation for SE Natsios' meeting with Bashir on December 13.

¶13. (SBU) This message was cleared by SE Natsios.  
HUME